

Schakowsky Calls People to Action

By Andrew Davis

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U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky spoke at an event entitled "Shaping the Future of Women's Rights: A Blueprint for Action During the Next Two Years," which was held Jan. 19 at the law offices of Jenner and Block, 330 N. Wabash.

Schakowsky once again proved just how compelling a presence she is with a rousing speech that focused on the Republican agenda and proposals regarding what activists can do to counter and prevail. She stated how left- and right-wingers are engaged in a war-and how any war involves strategy.

In describing what needed to be done to combat the Republican agenda, Schakowsky discussed three critical qualities: confidence, dedication, and coordination. In talking about confidence, she said that right-wingers talk about "the most amazing things," such as the fact that some science teachers have to read statements that evolution is just a theory-and it is with sureness that such policies are even put out there. She said that Democrats and like-minded individuals have "to not only defend the status quo, but to project a vision of a progressive, Democratic, free society in the tradition of the founders of our country."

Described as a "longtime advocate of women's issues" by emcee Meghan Streit [Chicago chapter of the National Organization for Women president and business manager of Windy City Times] , Schakowsky said people "do not have to feel apologetic that women have the right to

safe and legal abortions." Furthermore, she said that "women have died for that right-and [she'd] be damned if [she's] going to go backward on that."

In talking about discipline, Schakowsky said that Democrats need to figure out their message and how to "articulate values." She stated that people "need to figure out the language that can be heard by the majority of Americans who do support [the] agenda."

Regarding coordination, Schakowsky said that everyone needs to discover his or her role, possibly after taking inventory of the resources that Democrats have. Schakowsky also discussed tactics that right-wingers have employed, including the publishing of the Voter's Guide for Serious Catholics, which mentions five non-negotiable issues: abortion, euthanasia, fetal stem cell research, human cloning, and gay marriage.

The event was co-sponsored by Chicago NOW, WILPOWER, the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, and the Chicago Bar Association Alliance for Women.